



State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education

301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

State Rehabilitation Council Meeting Center for People in Need February 9, 2010

Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under “conferences & meetings” at least 5 days prior to each meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Teri Effle, Alvin Fox, Seamus Kelly, Jason Kerkman, Tim Kolb, Larry Niemeyer, Leslie Novacek, Vicki Obrecht, Deb Osentowski, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, Angela Smith, Terry Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mitch Arnold, Sharon Bloechle, Katie Durfee, Susan Gieschen, Pearl VanZandt

VR STAFF PRESENT: Don Crouch, Jim Coyle, Dennis King, Kristi Berst

PRESENTERS: Kathy Berger, Lincoln VR Office

The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:00 a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mark Schultz spoke about the Council bringing a sense of reality to the process and procedure discussions held within VR. A Service Appreciation award was presented to Deb Osentowski for her years of service on the Council.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Jason Kerkman moved and Seamus Kelly seconded a motion to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 13, 2009 MINUTES

Alvin Fox moved and Terry Wilson seconded a motion to approve the October 13, 2009 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY

Dennis King presented on the Bridges Out of Poverty program. Two training dates were held for VR staff on the Ruby Paine concepts of working with individuals in poverty. The evaluations of the training indicated that 70% of the participants felt the information would help them in their work with individuals in poverty. About 65% -70% felt the program should be implemented agency wide. Components staff felt would be needed to implement the program agency wide were consistency, inclusion, individualized services, a change in hours of operation, interactive bulletin board for all offices to share knowledge, and implementing the 'Getting Ahead' workshops. Partnering with other agencies in the community is an important aspect of reaching individuals in poverty.

VR BENEFITS ANALYSIS

Kathy Berger from the Lincoln Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Office spoke about the benefits analysis that VR does with clients that receive benefits. Accurate information is shared with them so they know how much they are able to work while maintaining benefits and maximizing their potential. Assistance is given to clients in adjusting budgets as different benefits may move based on their work status. VR staff has attended a variety of training to increase their expertise in benefits rules. Referrals are made to Easter Seals for continued follow-up after the individual has finished working with VR.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Kristi Berst shared information about the Nebraska Youth Leadership Council. The Council has a website running that shares information about their activities and upcoming meetings, <http://nylc.nebraska.gov>. The youth worked with the SRC Employment Committee to make a youth version of the Employment Retention Video that would speak more directly to their age group. Recruitment activities were done to build up the central and eastern regional councils. Youth will serve until they are 21 or until they want to quit. The VR transition staff may be able to help encourage kids to participate on the Council. There is a VR transition blog that is linked on the youth website and to the ESU 9 website on special education transition.

MEMBER FEEDBACK OF VR

No feedback was given.

MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS

No feedback or clarification was given.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mark Schultz reported on the latest VR events.

- All goals from last year were met. The economy is making it more difficult to place individuals in some jobs.
- Stimulus projects began in October. There were 14.1 FTEs funded by stimulus dollars.
- The Project SEARCH open house was held in Grand Island and was very successful. The hospital is planning to hire some of the individuals out of the program.

- VR was exempt from the state budget cut that was imposed upon other programs. Still, VR is projecting a \$750,000 deficit. They are hoping to avoid having to create a waiting list for services. The deficit this year will also affect next year.
- Area administrator positions were eliminated to create a direct flow of communication among all staff and to enhance a team strategy.
- A Leadership Council was built with membership of two individuals from each team that will share information with the Council and back to their team.
- Mark Schultz recommended that a SRC committee be established on Consumer Input. The Committee would consist of two SRC council members, six members from the community, one office director and one program director. The Client Services Committee will take this recommendation to their Committee meeting and report back to the Council.
- The vision for the agency will be developed by all the staff and through collaboration.
- Components that will be implemented in VR over the next year are: a team service approach, individualized services, increase in staff knowledge, monthly training opportunities, good communication with an in-house newsletter, and an 'Ask the Director' blog for posting unanimous questions that all staff can view and see the Director's answer.
- The development of community partnerships will be a focus as VR can't provide everything. Linkages with other agencies and their expertise will be utilized.
- VR as an agency needs to BE the standard, not just MEET the standard. There is opportunity to be at the forefront and set the standard for the country.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Client Services Committee

Kipp Ransom shared that Kristen Lucas from UNL spoke with them about focus groups. The Committee is considering a focus group of past and current VR users in an effort to gather input on VR services. Mark is also interested in forming a committee to gather input.

Kipp Ransom moved and Tim Kolb seconded a motion to support the development and implementation of a Consumer Input Committee. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.** Vicky Rasmussen and Deb Osentowski will start to lay the framework for developing this Committee.

Kipp Ransom will no longer chair the Client Services Committee as he is the Chair of the Council. Larry Neimeyer will take over as Chair of the Committee.

Employer Services Committee

Jason Kerkman shared that the Senator Luncheon will be held on Tuesday, February 16 at the State Capitol in room 1023. The luncheon is being sponsored by Senator's Howard and Parrish and approximately 30 Senators and aids have signed up to attend. Kipp is giving a presentation based on the speaking points and the brochure that will be distributed.

The 'Entrepreneur of The Year' will be awarded again this year. The nomination process will begin shortly with awards given in July.

The survey and letter to businesses was drafted and will go out to businesses that have hired through VR in the past. Jason Kerkman moved and Alvin Fox seconded a motion to send the survey out to selected businesses. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.** Responses should be back by the April meeting.

Transition Committee

Angela Smith shared for the Transition Committee.

- The Transition Round Table will not be held this year.
- The Autism Conference is being held on April 8 & 9 in Kearney.
- Transition blogs went live in January.
- Parents with children in VR should have a good communication link with the transition counselor. It is being considered that the amount of contact be dictated to ensure the communication.
- 40% of the 2006 special education graduates entered into adult programs.
- A study of data will be done to determine the number of drop-outs that enter into VR services.
- YRTC has hired a transition coordinator.
- Education packets are not going to be printed but are available on the web page.

VR/ATP VIDEO

Don Crouch shared a video that shows how VR and ATP assisted an individual in adapting to his job requirements.

REVIEW OF SRC DUTIES

Don reviewed the functions of the Council as stated in regulation.

ADJOURN

The next meeting will be held on April 13, 2010.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.